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# Becoming the Senior Resident: Embracing Leadership in Emergency Medicine

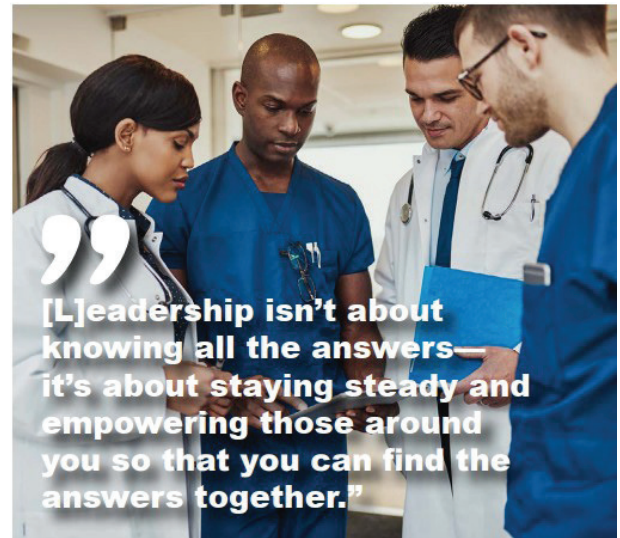
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The transition from intern to senior resident is one of the most transformative chapters in emergency medicine training. It's a leap from being the learner to becoming the leader, from managing your patients to managing the entire team. While the idea of stepping into this role may be intimidating, it is also a unique opportunity to hone your skills, solidify your knowledge, and discover the kind of physician—and leader—you want to be.

As an intern, the focus is on building a strong foundation: how to evaluate patients efficiently, order the right tests, navigate the complexities of the hospital system, and develop clinical confidence. You focus on refining your clinical acumen and learning to survive—and eventually thrive—in the fast-paced world of emergency medicine. As a senior resident, your role shifts. Now, you're expected to see the department as a whole. Suddenly, you're not just managing patients but also managing the room and guiding the team through the organized chaos of the emergency room.

The senior resident is the person others look to in moments of uncertainty for assurance and decisive action. When the intern feels overwhelmed while managing a crashing patient, you're the one who steps in when things go sideways. When a medical student struggles during a laceration repair, you're the one who teaches with patience and reassurance. But it's not just about making decisions—it's about making others feel empowered even when the pressure is on. And as a senior resident, you have the power to set the tone for the team—your attitude, communication, and leadership style can

make or break morale.



One of the most fulfilling aspects of being a senior resident is teaching. In the emergency department, every case offers a lesson. You'll explain procedures, share pearls of wisdom, and guide junior learners through their own challenges. What you may not expect is how much teaching others will teach you in return. It forces you to articulate your reasoning, uncover gaps in your own understanding, and push yourself to master concepts you once struggled with.

Perhaps the biggest shift in mindset as a senior is learning to balance individual patient care with department flow. You'll need to see the big picture: recognizing when to escalate care, who needs imaging urgently, when to push for a disposition, the order of operations for your to-dos, and when to guide your learners versus step back. It's a balancing act and the ability to juggle all these moving parts is a skill that requires intuition, experience, and adaptability—one that you will continue to develop

even into attendinghood.

The shift from intern to senior resident is more than just a change in title; it's a rite of passage. This transition is your chance to grow—not just as a physician, but as a leader and mentor. Embrace the moments that challenge you because those are the moments that shape you. Remember why you chose emergency medicine: the adrenaline, the variety, the chance to make a difference in someone's worst day.

This responsibility can feel daunting, but that's okay. Growing pains are part of the process. Imposter syndrome may rear its head and there will be moments when you are uncomfortable and question your readiness. These feelings are natural and often a sign of how much you care. The key is to lean into the discomfort—it's where growth happens. There will be moments when you become overwhelmed and will need the support and guidance of your own seniors. That is also a natural part of your growth. Every shift, every difficult

case, every tough decision is molding you into a stronger physician.

The good news is that you're not alone. Mentorship from attending physicians, support from peers, and feedback from your team will help you navigate this transition. Take time to reflect on your leadership style, celebrate small victories, and embrace mistakes as opportunities to learn.

Your journey as a senior resident will be full of highs and lows, but with every shift, you'll become stronger, more confident, and more capable. You'll walk out of this phase not only as a better doctor but as a mentor of strength and support for your juniors. Even on the hardest days, remind yourself: leadership isn't about knowing all the answers—it's about staying steady and empowering those around you so that you can find the answers together.

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